



Filters

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They Add Impact to Your Images

Camera filters can help improve your images in various ways—they're useful for increasing contrast in an image, creating more vivid colors, eliminating glare and distracting reflections from water and glassy surfaces, and more. But they can also be used to add a little oomph to an otherwise lackluster shot by adding some interesting effects, like multi-point “stars” on light sources or soften

Screw-On Filters

Also called a circular filter, this is any lens filter that is directly mounted and screwed onto the front of a lens. There are different camera filters that fall under this category, including the most commonly used ones like **polarizers, and ND filters**. They usually vary in diameter or thickness, and the thickest ones can sometimes produce vignetting in your images. **Protective UV and skylight filters** are often used to protect the front element of a lens against moisture, dirt, and scratches, which makes them ideal for shooting in wet, dusty, or muddy environments.

On the other hand, skylight filters are every photographer's best friend when shooting under a clear blue sky. They can reduce the excessive blue cast that often appears in photographs taken outdoors. They can also keep skin tones free of color reflections from objects that are around the subject.

Keep in mind, however, that with a skylight filter as your lens' protection, the image quality of your photos may be compromised as it can intensify lens flares that tend to add a color tint and reduce image contrast.

Polarizing filters, pretty much like sunglasses, add depth to an image by saturating its color and reducing reflections. These filters have a rotating mount that's easy to attach to a lens. Once a polarizing filter is mounted on your lens and the subject is already framed, you can slowly rotate the filter while watching how the image changes on your camera's viewfinder or live view.

Polarizers are best for shooting landscapes. They darken skies and make colors pop, as well as eliminate glare and reduce reflections on glass. When photographing landscapes, avoid panning your camera because it can create uneven, dark areas in the sky. Also, you need to be careful when using this filter with an ultra wide-angle lens, as it can also cause the blue color of the sky to look uneven in your photos.

Neutral density (ND) filters are sheets of dark-colored glasses that reduce the amount of light that enters your lens and hits to the sensor, but without affecting the color of the resulting image. This includes excess sunlight and powerful light from studio flashes.

An ND filter doesn't need any adjustment at all, and you can still use the metering and focusing system of your camera and lens even with this filter attached to your lens.

By reducing the intensity of incoming light, this filter allows you to shoot with slower shutter speeds without overexposing your image. In that case, if you're going to take a photo of a moving subject like flowing water, make sure to use a tripod for more dramatic motion blur and to ensure that everything else is tack sharp.

Most suitable for:

Landscape photography, Flash photography, Street photography, Photographing moving bodies of water like rivers and falls.

Graduated Neutral Density Filter

Graduated neutral density filters (also known as **ND Grad or GND filters**) have a vertical transition between dark and clear to balance the exposure between the sunny sky and its darker foreground. They vary in darkness and are measured in "stops"—the number of stops of light determines how much it will darken part of GND filters generally come in three common types: soft-edged, hard-edged, and reverse.

- **Hard-Edge GND Filter** – Has a neutral gray half that sharply transitions to clear at the center. It is mostly used to balance out high-contrast scenes, such as a flat horizon with bright skies and a dark foreground, to create an evenly exposed image.
- **Soft-Edge GND Filter** – More commonly preferred for its smoother gradient between the dark and clear areas, this filter is best used if the horizon is not perfectly straight or flat; you can also opt for this if the

hard-edge filter tends to create a noticeable midline for your chosen scene.

- **Reverse GND Filter** – Special filter that landscape photographers use to shoot beautiful sunrises and sunsets when the sun is much closer to the horizon. Unlike regular GND filters that transition from dark to light in the middle, this type changes from dark (for the sky) to darker (for the sun) on the top half and then all clear on the lower half (for the foreground).

Most suitable for:

- Landscape photography
- Shooting during the golden hours: after sunrise and before sunset



Special effects filters serve different purposes in improving your images. Perhaps the most popular type of special effects filters is the **starburst filter**, which effortlessly adds a noticeable twinkle to image highlights and light sources such as street lamps and Christmas lights. You can choose from filters that produce two-, four-, six-, or eight-point stars and light flares.



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